

African Journal
of
Philosophy

VOLUME

6

2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

S/N	TITLE / AUTHOR(S)	PAGE(S)
1	In Defense of a Logical Taxonomy of Fallacies <i>Uduma Oji Uduma</i>	1-14
2	Cultural Approaches to Sexual Matters in Nigeria with Regard to Women and Girls: Focus on Mbanese Clan <i>Ezedinachi, Ifeoma Edith PhD</i>	15-26
3	Identity Politics and Its Security Implication to National Development: The Nigeria's Experience Since 1914 <i>Udeagwu, C. Okechukwu & Chidiobi, Okechukwu Christian</i>	27-49
4	Niccolo Machiavelli's Indifference to Morality and Its Catastrophic Effects on Nigerian Democracy <i>Augustine Chukwuemeka Aka PhD</i>	50-59
5	Restructuring and the Re-Making of Nigeria: A Do or Die Affair <i>Dr. Joannes Asikaogu & Dr. Obonyano Dickson B.</i>	60-69
6	Environmental Degradation in Niger Delta: Challenges and Prospects for Better Society <i>Anthony Nwachukwu</i>	70-82
7	Philosophical Discourse on Feminism <i>Dr. Joannes Asikaogu & Dr. Obonyano Dickson B.</i>	83-95
8	Nationalization of Resources and Economic Development in Post-Colonial Africa, Case of Zimbabwe, 1980-2008 <i>Kelechi Collins Okoro PhD</i>	96-104
9	Ethnophobia and the Culture of Inclusion in the Nigerian Nation <i>Joseph Monday Orji & Donatus Oluwa Chukwu</i>	105-120
10	Democracy in Nigeria: A Far Journey into Ideological Paradise <i>Cyril Udebunu PhD</i>	121-133

DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA: A FAR JOURNEY INTO IDEOLOGICAL PARADISE

Cyril Udehunu PhD

Department of Philosophy

Pope John Paul II Seminary, Awka South

Abstract

This paper interrogates the persistent challenges confronting Nigeria's democratic experience, as reflected in widespread concerns about political inefficiency and moral shortcomings in its public sphere. While noting the recurring critique of Nigeria's democratic practice in scholarly and media discourse, the study argues that such persistence signals unresolved structural and ideological problems, as well as a possible lack of political will to implement necessary reforms. Consequently, it raises critical questions about the suitability of democracy within the Nigerian context and the reasons for the enduring difficulty in overcoming its negative manifestations despite years of practice. Hence, by examining the nature and comparative value of democracy among global systems, as well as Nigeria's historical engagement with it, the paper identifies a key deficiency, i.e. "the lack of fidelity to party convictions" as a central factor undermining democratic consolidation. In conclusion, the paper holds that this ideological inconsistency significantly impedes Nigeria's progress toward a stable and functional democratic order.

Keywords: Democraccy, Nigeria, reforms, and ideological paradise.

Introduction

Today, hardly does one take a fleeting look on any Nigerian Journal, Magazine or Newspaper without plummeting on the theme of Nigeria's democratic clumsiness and associated political and moral ineptitude. It is a subject that persists on pages of writings with some disturbing recalcitrance. And one way to explain it is to think that there is some veritable problem with Nigeria's democracy and civil society. Generally, when issues are examined and passed over but continue to attract attention, one expects that they contain genuine problem but unsatisfactory solution. In the case of Nigeria's politics, it is either her ideological problems have not fully been identified and analyzed with appropriate solution or there have not been sufficient goodwill to travel the inescapable routes towards curbing the ills discovered. This is why the following fundamental questions may be necessary: Of all the political ideologies that have been constructed, is democracy the most suited polity for Nigerians? If democracy is her most preferable polity as some would answer, why are the negativities which are usually overcome in democratic polity very intractable getting over in Nigeria, even after so many years of this experiment?

This article casts steady glance on Nigerian society as it examines what democracy is all about; its preference vis-à-vis other world polities; Nigeria's journey

through its democratic experiment and the exposed deficient principle (fidelity to party convictions) which it recognizes as making her voyage to the democratic Eldorado problematic and its attainment illusory.

Meaning of Democracy

As a concept, democracy originated from the Ancient Greece (Athens). It is a derivative of the Greek word *dēmokratia* meaning “the rule of the people” or “the rule by the people”. Its constitution according to Pericles “affords equal justice to all in their private differences, here the advancement in public life falls to reputation for capacity, class considerations are not allowed to interfere with merit, nor again does poverty bar the way; if a man is able to serve the state, he is not hindered by the obscurity of his condition. The freedom which is enjoyed in government extends also to ordinary life.” This represents the essential ingredients of democracy in the ancient Greece where Pericles lived.

Aristotle defines it as “the rule of the many for the good of the poor” as opposed to oligarchy which is “the rule of the few for the good of the wealthy.” Aristotle makes this contrast to indicate the intrinsic character of the two polities: whereas in oligarchy, the rulers are few because there are only few people who are wealthy, in democracy they are many because liberty is enjoyed by all alike. In democracy therefore, liberty is the ground on which the people lay claim to government. Although there can be nuances in the world’s democracies, it is generally a government in which power and civic responsibility are exercised by all citizens, directly or through their freely elected representatives. Democracy is a set of principles and practices that protect human freedom; it is the institutionalisation of freedom.

Apart from this ancient outline on the meaning of democracy, this polity which we have characterized by liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal, was given the most popular conceptualization in the modern times by Abraham Lincoln (19 November, 1863) at the Union cemetery in Gettysburg, Philadelphia. He describes it as “a government of the people, by the people and for the people.” It is a polity that respects the rule of majority, but protects at the same time the fundamental rights of individuals and minority groups. In all democracies are meant to be a regular, free and fair elections open to all citizens.

Most recently, Susan Rice, the US Department’s Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, while explaining the implications of democracy to Nigerians who were on train to pass over from military to democratic rule, emphasized its general participatory dimension: “Our road map for measuring democratic progress is universal and unwavering. A credible transition would include a transparent and participatory process; ...provisions for free political activity and party formation allowing all those who wish to run to do so freely; freedom of association, speech, and the press; unrestricted access to the media by all candidates and parties; impartial electoral preparation; and elections open to all.”^{iv}

In addition to free and uninhibited participatory political process, democracy unlike communism, has also an aspect of individual empowerment for economic

prosperity — economically empowering smaller units such as the individual or the community collectively through democratic mechanisms. This is done according to Alistair McConnachie through a creation of money directed to “a public service, under public control for the public good.” It means that the ongoing method of money creation or money-lending, whereby every money grant to a society arrives as an interest bearing debt owed to the private banking system or world financial organizations is contrary to the democratic imperative, because they often strangle economy and impoverish young democracies especially in countries where corruption appears to be deep-rooted. Democracy is required to lead to prosperity and social progress. This economic aspect is highlighted by the one time US secretary of State, Albright while addressing African democracy in February 2000. She says: “Elections, moreover, are but one note in the democratic symphony. A full orchestra is required, including markets that reward initiative...” In democracy is an immense space for the development of every aspect of the human spirit and potentialities for the enjoyment of the abundance in human life.

Nigeria's Preference for Democracy

As a system of government, democracy “has been much eulogised but also vilified.” Nevertheless, it has remained the noblest and most imitated polity in the world. Among the most celebrated eulogies of democracy are those found in the speeches of the Athenian statesman Pericles, especially in the famous funeral oration after the first year of the Peloponnesian war. In this oration, Pericles considers democracy as one of the greatest legacies the Greeks bequeathed to our planet and now is being imitated the world over. Asserting the originality to the Athenians and describing its marvellous character of taking care of countless number of people, he said, “our constitution does not copy the laws of neighbouring states; we are rather a pattern to others than imitators ourselves. He affirms favour the many, instead of the few; this is why it is called a democracy.” He signaled hereafter other constitutive elements of this polity as well as its many other qualities for which their city was worthy of admiration.

In the Gettysburg address, Abraham Lincoln made a glowing tribute to democracy in the speech where he praised the dead who gave themselves up in the cause of democracy, and consequently sealed the American's fate and inseparable destiny with it: “From these honoured dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion — that we here highly resolved that these dead shall not have died in vain — that this nation, shall have a new birth of freedom and that government of the people, by the people for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

From the background of the French revolution which was still fresh in his mind, Alexis de Tocqueville painted on his own part, the picture of democracy as a polity dazzling with splendor and embracing the entire humanity, a universal phenomena, an historical movement that is founded on the idea of equality of all men, a sweeping movement controlling every event in history and for which everyone advertently or inadvertently has worked to actualise. For him, to put an obstacle on the path of democracy is synonymous with resistance to God's providence; “If the men of our time

should be convinced, by attentive observation and sincere reflection, that the gradual and progressive development of social equality is at once the past and the future of their history, this discovery alone would confer the sacred character of a Divine decree upon the change. To attempt to check democracy would be in that case to resist the will of God; and the nations would then be constrained to make the best of the social lot awarded to them by providence.”^x

Democracy enhances freedom, which according to Hegel, “is the sole truth of Spirit”. The Spirit yearns for freedom and stops at nothing on the road to its gratification. Nations have fought to gain democracy, and in such desire and thirst for democracy have offered up their suffering, artificial or natural, as nothing comparable to the deep yearning of their spirit. Democracy is a global quest that is anchored on human nature. The Polish experience of solidarity in the face of the communist atomisation of the individual is an example; the African clamour for democracy at a time when they were virtually denuded even of the primary necessities of life points again to the urgency of this pursuit as anchored on the anvil of their existence. In his article, “Democratic Transition in Africa,” Claude Ake underscored this point, that though commodities disappeared from grocery stores in Lusaka and Dar es Salaam, though inflation got out of control in Kinshasa and Lagos, and bankrupt government failed to pay wages in Cotonou, though poverty intensified everywhere in Africa defeating all possibilities of self-realisation, threatening even mere physical existence, democracy movement in Africa kept on as among other things, an expression of the will to survive.

The above tributes to democracy notwithstanding, it cannot be said to be without shortcomings nor could it be said to have gained unanimous acceptance. Not even among the contemporaries of Pericles was this enthusiastic feeling for democracy evenly shared, nor among the scholars of later years in the face of the various ways it has been practiced in the course of history. Indeed, for some people, as C. B. Macpherson pointed out, “democracy used to be a bad word.” From the earliest historical times to the present era, a large body of intelligent men, such as Heidegger, Eliot, Chesterton, Tate, Paul Claudel have shown contempt for democracy, and many others have looked at it with suspicion. They picture it, says Barret, as “expropriating the propertied (class), and vulnerable to ignorant demagogues”. Plato, for one, had no good words at all for democracy; he condemned it on account of the dangers it portends. “The insatiate lust for wealth and the neglect of everything else for the sake of money-making,” he said, “is the cause of democracy’s undoing.” For him, “tyranny develops sometimes out of no other constitution than democracy.”^{xvi} This comes when in its excess thirst for liberty and neglect of other things, the democratic constitution is consequently revolutionized and thus prepares the way for the emergence of a dictator. From Plato’s ‘Seventh Letter’ we learnt that his proposed “ideal state” which was constructed on republican principles, came as a result of trying to avoid the uncanny tendency of the democratic rule. One of such abhorable tendency according to Plato, was the “tyranny of the majority rule” by which often good things are compromised by ignorant majority. But the most devastating aspect that led to Plato’s

distaste for democracy was the death penalty passed on his friend and teacher Socrates by the ignorant Athenian parliament.

This death which was caused by what we call the “tyranny of democratic mob,” left him disgusted and finally prepared the stage for him to propose for Athens a better state based on tripartite structure of the human reason — the ideal state.

It is also nice to recall the fact that no other place but in Athens, the democratic Eldorado of Pericles that the infamous ‘might is right’ philosophy was first formulated. Here we read in the Athenian-Melian dialogue, how Athens had besieged the island of Melos, which though a Spartan colony, had remained neutral to their time’s military expeditions, not participating in the struggle during the Peloponnesian wars. The poor islanders had received ultimatum from Athens to either surrender to slavery or have their city erased from the map of the world. The Melians refused to give themselves up as slaves with the following message: “we will not in a moment deprive of freedom a city that has been inhabited these seven hundred years.” They were summarily wiped out by the military might of Athens and the justification for this barbarism appeared to be that in an unequal contest, the weaker must at all cost give up to the stronger if he wishes to preserve himself in existence. Such was the morality of Pericles’ model political constitution other nations had to imitate. Indeed, Athens was the founding father of democracy that promoted freedom and equality of all men, but made a greater percentage of her population slaves. Hegel was right when he wrote in his *Philosophy of History*: “The consciousness of Freedom first rose among the Greeks, and therefore they were free, but they...knew only that some are free— not man as such.” According to him, “their whole life and the maintenance of their splendid liberty, was implicated with the institution of slavery, a fact...which made that liberty...only an accidental, transient and limited growth.” The same is the modern American and European state democracy beautifully defined as the rule by the people and for the people, though in practice is no better represented except through inductive reasoning. In fact, scholars have shown that in Western democracies, it is not the people who actually rule as democracy tends to illustrate but the parties or their financiers who patronize and control the state! All these, of course, negate the ideals of democracy.

In the face of all these inadequacies then, people have sometime revolted and asked why the fuss and excitement about democracy, after all it shares in the good, the bad and the ugly associated with all political systems. This argument points at least to the fact that there is always something good about any political system, but it is too simplistic to level everything and to think that any good is as good as the other, or that any evil is as bad as the other. Democracy has its bad strictures but is still very attractive. Indeed, one would agree with Winston Churchill that “democracy is the worst form of government except for all those that have been tried.” This means that in spite of its shortfalls, democracy is better than all known and tried polities. Democracy inspires political creativity and goodwill which are stifled by all other political systems. It has its defects, but one important aspect of democracy is that it raises humanity to a higher level. In one of the interviews carried on Nigeria’s chief of Army staff, Lt. General Luka

Yusuf, he maintained while speaking on nation building, that “no system can move Nigeria forward than democracy.” He stated this without prejudice to his profession as a soldier and their common lust for power, but held that all the developed countries of the world have achieved their glories thanks to their practice of democratic polity. They are “reaping” he said, “the benefits of democracy.” The reason for this is because in democracy, you are allowed to express your mind freely, and if you can express your mind freely, you are bound to bring the best out of you.^{xxiv} Although Yusuf indicated some impalpable experience of rancor in our democracy’s legislative house, he vouched it immediately by the relative good as well. For him, “all the hooting, all the tearing of agenda, the postures and the rancor in National Assembly are not in vain: No, people are who trying to express themselves, and at the end of it all, the fruits will surely show outward for the benefit of Nigeria and Nigerians. And so, he went on to say that if we have been following all these years that would have seen us through to democracy.”^{xxiv}

What makes democracy different from totalitarian regimes is the belief that each individual has certain basic rights which are neither conferred by nor derived from the State, but are God given. This is expressed in the sublime words of Thomas Jefferson at the declaration of American independence in 1776: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” In the history of the world, no other socio-political document had expressed in profoundly eloquent and clear language this fact of the dignity and worth of the human person as is outlined in the contexts of democracy.

Democracy is preferred to all other polities because in it is the affirmation of human rights and natural law. These are the rights of man as man, rights which accrue to him necessarily and universally and are not bound by space and time. Although natural these rights are to man, one must also admit that only in Medieval era had it its first expression in the world of nations, i.e. from the Magna Charta signed in 1215. Some people date it even to a more recent French Revolution at which time the belief in *liberté, égalité* and *fraternité* was declared. There are others who point to the writings of the Ten Commandments and subsequently the Gospel as the earliest articulation of these rights. In any case, the existence of these rights precedes their formal articulation. The rights expressing the dignity of human person come from God, not from nations, not from any human quality or accomplishment, not from race or gender, age or economic status; and these rights are safeguarded in democracy.

The aforementioned reasons explain also why the Church which is not democratic but hierarchical in her administration and operations nevertheless adopts democracy and promotes it in the world of nations. In his visit to Chile, a reporter had asked John Paul II whether he expected to help restore democratic polities to a communist oriented Chile. The Pontiff’s reply summarised the relationship between the Gospel, the human rights and democracy: “Yes, yes” he said, “I am not the evangeliser of democracy; I am the evangeliser of the Gospel. To the Gospel message, of course, belong all the problems of human rights, and if democracy means human rights then it also belongs to the message of the Church.” For him, the Church’s interest

and preference for democracy to other systems is that, “the people have right to their liberties, even if they make mistakes in exercising them.” Given all these therefore, there could not have been anything better than Nigeria’s choice for democracy. Democratic government is “the most valid historical instrument” for advancing human rights and development. It has proven to be an effective means of “guaranteeing the future in a way worthy of man.” The question then is, how could Nigeria overcome the anti-democratic tendencies that militate its progress and suspend the gains of democracy too far away from her reach?

Import of Political Parties in Democracy

It is the aim of this thesis to show that one of the essential ingredients of democracy is the role of political parties in safeguarding various interest groups especially those of the minority and ensuring the excellence of democratic plurality. The article demonstrates that though these political parties are said to exist in Nigerian democracy, the country unfortunately has been incapable of realizing the concomitant political gain which consequently keep her ideological paradise on hold. In describing democracy, Plato personified it as “a manifold man stuffed with most excellent differences, and that like that city he is the fair and many-colored one whom many a man and woman would count fortunate in his life, as containing within himself the greatest number of patterns of constitutions and qualities.” Political parties are formed cognizant of the essential plurality of values and convictions permitted within the framework of democratic polity, values so closely neat to individual’s personality and vision; values that one could not compromise without giving up certain convictions or principles upon which one’s life has been molded and on which hope he wishes to realize his destiny.

In general, political parties are said to be something similar to factions which according to Madison is defined as “a number of citizens whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community.” The term “adverse” seems negative in this definition but it underscores the key phrase in it. For on further analysis, one discovers that what one side of a partisan political body considers adverse, the other considers favorable. Thus Madison’s definition advocates somehow a theory of numerous factions negating the ill effects of each other, the theory which is nothing but the forerunner of the pluralist political theories advocated by scholars such as Robert Dahl in his landmark study *Who Governs?* in 1961.

Not only therefore, that political parties guarantee the representation of groups’ cherished values or interests, they also provide a check, an opposition to what they find not so pleasant in other groups’ ideals. They are there as sureties for the satisfactory performance of official duties by men in government, curbing the excesses of one another through cooperation. In America for instance, their twoparty system came to be formed in view of this goal. The carefully elaborated system of checks and balances made the executive and legislative cooperation necessary in the development of policy. Here, the division of legislative powers between the federal and state

governments made it crucial for advocates of such policies (ideologies) to seek representation or strength in both the federal and state legislatures. And as these objectives were too complex and difficult to achieve by impermanent groupings, the formation of two permanent political parties (democratic and republican) became inevitable. Today, these parties continue to play this role in safeguarding the American dreams.

Political parties are formed each around a single issue or a certain number of interests. Some form policies to address all matters of government known as a "platform." In general, a political party must have a set of ideas and beliefs called its "ideology" and the common ideologies include environmentalism, socialism, liberalism, conservatism, nationalism etc. Shain Rail writes: "We are emphasizing that political parties are or should be always anchored on specific ideologies. The building blocks of political parties are interest groups. Leaders of these interest groups articulate the interests of their members by putting into words the vaguely felt needs, fears and expectations of their constituents and then translate these feelings into specific demands for legislation or other government actions." For Shain, once the individuals are aware that their common concern are shared with an interest group, many of them automatically "pass from a passive audience of potential adherents into the group's active members and supporters."

Akin to the Western world, Nigeria has as well her political parties. But whereas in these advanced countries, political parties represent various ideologies or doctrines guaranteeing democratic plurality and providing checks that help to maintain a genuine human society, in Nigeria the political parties serve only as volatile groupings from where national recognitions are sought, waiting for an eventual cross-over to the ruling one-party-government, opposed to the ideological beliefs of the defectors and evidently to their initial standpoint. The issue is no longer the fundamental option, or what John Rawls calls the "original position" but the desire for power, money and other self-interests. The politics of "having neither a permanent enemy nor friend" or the maxim "if you cannot beat them, you join them" has been packaged and sold out to Nigerian people as a permanent political attitude, a thing which defiles the fundamental principle of democratic equations and makes democracy in Nigeria still a far cry to that promise land.

In his article entitled "Dynamics of Party Politics in Democracy" Pita Ejiofor lamented over this inept structure of Nigeria's party politics. He even noted that often the party jobs or offices are generally reserved to those who can pay up their way, the wealthy citizens who practically buy up the parties through enormous and incredible donations to the parties. Many a times, these donations come not on account of the individual candidates' initiative but directly requested by the parties to do so. He writes: "Political parties themselves as well as the electoral body charged with the responsibility of conducting the elections demand excessive deposit from candidates contesting the elections. Every discerning person knows the implications of these donations and deposits... Not only does this practice put good but impecunious political aspirants at a grave disadvantage, it also encourages graft and corruption on the part of successful candidates when they get into office." But, the aforementioned

side-effects on the successful candidates apart, the evil-effect of this attitude on the less fortunate parties has been so common to our experience—it is the relegation of all party commitments and principles of party politicking for personal enrichment. To recover what has been spent, the candidates often wait for monetary offer from the leading party to drop or lay down effective opposition, or they embark on serious business of show-casing themselves as actual threat to the ruling party only to throw in the opposition at any good bid.

A tip of the iceberg is seen after the last elections in Nigeria, the exercise that brought in the ill constituted leaders of the present democratic dispensation. Now, Abubakar Rimi who belonged to Action Congress (AC) is recently said to have opted out and joined the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), a party he earlier vehemently opposed up to the point of supreme sacrifices of losing wife and children on criminal attacks by the opponents. Senator N. N. Anah who stood for the APGA as its brain and pillar has also realigned himself with PDP. The presidential candidate of Action Alliance (AA) Sir Solomon Onyekwelu has now abrogated his commitments and dumped his party for PDP. We can multiply examples. Indeed, the country appears to be moving towards a one party system. According to Pita Ejiofor, “The dynamics of party politics in Third World countries is greatly influenced by an inordinate quest to acquire power by party members for their selfish and other primordial interest rather than for national interest. This is in sharp contrast with the advanced democracies where national interest is always paramount.”^{xxxiv}

The worst kind of scenario was witnessed in Anambra State at the taking of N10 million bribe by the governorship aspirant under NAP from his counterpart of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA). The purpose was for the former to compromise his position. He took the money and thus extinguished a voice and those of other electorates who had invested their interests in him. As if this was not enough, when APGA candidate finally won in a court tussle against PDP governorship nominee, the latter struck a greater deal with the NAP candidate to subvert the court decision favoring APGA. He coalesced with PDP counterpart to demand the Supreme Court to set aside its judgment, i.e. to reverse itself against the APGA candidate on the fault of having offered bribe to him. This was not from any moral duty since he could not be an ambassador of moral conscience but to usher in PDP candidate as the governor and therefore get his pay. Fortunately, in an unprecedented turn of history, the judiciary gave a token of hope in its legal proceedings. Addressing the NAP candidate during his judgment, one of the judges summarized the matter as follows: “We want to maintain the highest standards of justice, the sum total of your position is that you accepted money to withdraw from the case, but later turned around to blackmail and say that you have been compromised, asking the court to set aside its judgment... I have a feeling that you are one of those exploiting politicians and making things difficult for them to rule this country.”^{xxxv} Another judge simply told him: “You are not fit for a decent society but the jungle among animals.”^{xxxvi}

Conclusion

Today, our democratic society appears to have centralized all aspects of life with a single political ideology that tolerates no rival, a single vision defining not only truth but also personal rectitude. This has caused the nation to approximate an atomized condition. In his article, "Democratic Culture, the Church and Democratization in West Africa," Simeon reminds us that a democratic culture exudes among other things, the culture of dialogue, justice and fair-play, reciprocity, pluralism and unity in diversity. It is not a culture of monologue, of mono-culturalism, systemic exploitation, oppression, manipulation, intimidation, and structural injustice.^{xxxvii} In any good democracy, the voice of opposition is indispensable if the evils of the ruling party's ideology can be checked.

Absconding from participation for fear of death or threat to life is actually not the best option. "Voice" says Victor Azariya, "is a participation option, it involves an engagement, a willingness to take risk of retaliation by the opposite side. The risk is taken because of the belief in one's ability to make a difference and one's sense of responsibility and duty to try it. Exit, conversely, is an evasion of such responsibility, an avoidance of the risks of involvement, a withdrawal or disengagement from public action."^{xxxviii}

It is also required that the political parties think first of the common good which is the propelling force in desiring to serve. The guiding principle of action in a democratic culture is the Common Good, or the General Will as coined by Jean Jacques Rousseau. It is the understanding that the primary duty of the State is to promote the Common Good of the whole community, i.e. what brings to the people some collective joy and happiness.^{xxxix} Every indication shows that most aims of the political parties are not for the collective interest of the state, but as platforms for personal grab of power and money. There is no commitment, no desire to improve the status-quo, no sacrifice, no ideological conviction, no voice of opposition. It is a structure inherently defective, serving institutions already plagued, and unless there is a change of perspective, that democratic Eldorado will remain a distant desire.

Endnotes and References

i Thucydides. *The History of the Peloponnesian Wars* Bk. II, xxxvii, (See *Great Books of the Western World*, vol. 5, London, 1991) ii Aristotle, *Politics*, III, v. 7., New York: Penguin Books Ltd. 1981.

iii Abraham Lincoln "The Gettysburg Address, 1863" in *The New Rights of Man*, ed. Jon E. Lewis, London: Robinson, 2003, p. 421.

iv cf. Kevin H. Ellsworth «Identities' Conflicts: Wedding Nigeria's Sub-national and International Identities and the Conflicts they» *Enablcx*, 27 March 1998. <http://www.public.asu.edu/~elshwrt/isa2001.htm>. T. Okere lists as rights enjoyed under all democratic framework the "Freedom of speech, worship, assembly, freedom of movement, the right to work, self-determination, freedom of thought" ("Human

Rights and Democratization in West Africa”, in *Church and Democracy in West Africa*, Port-Harcourt, 2003, p. 31). v Alistair McConnachie, «The five principles of democracy» in *Sovereignty*, March 2003. vi See Kevin H. Ellsworth *ibid*.

vii Okere T., «Human Rights and Democratization in Africa» in *Church and Democracy in Africa*, edited by Ferdinand Nwaigbo, CIWA publications–PortHarcourt, 2003, p. 35

viii Thucydides. *The History of the Peloponnesian Wars* – Translator C. F. Smith; Loeb Classical Library, vol. 1, Bk. II, xxxvii.

ix Cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, «Abraham Lincoln – Gettysburg address», vol. 10, p. 991

x A. de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, edited and abridged by R. D. Heffner, Mentor Book, The New American Library, New York, 1956.

xi Claude Ake, «Democratic Transition in Africa», Keynote paper at the meeting of the Political Association of Nigeria, Ibadan, June, 1992, pp. 16–19.

xii There were times when democratic rights were meant only for the propertied class, «requiring property to justify itself to democracy, rather than the other way round» (Cf. Bruce Ackerman, «Crediting the Voters, A New Beginning for a Campaign Finances in *The American Prospect* 13, Spring 1993, pp. 71–80). One can call the above a «means-tested suffrage». By this exercise, democratic rights and privileges were so restricted that everywhere it was the fairly affluent bourgeois class who had the vote, and who decided what was good to themselves. Occasionally there are revolutions at the end of which the democratic process would aim against the rich and expropriate them. At some other times, democratic practice shifted to universal manhood suffrage by which only men from the age of 25 could exercise the right of vote and decision in policy issues, the women were kept at the margin. (Cf. Andrew McLaren Carstairs, *A Short History of Electoral Systems in Western Europe*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1980). A

xiii Macpherson, C. D., *The Real World of democracy*, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1996, p. 1.

xiv Maclean, Iain, *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics*, Oxford Paperback reference, 1996, p. 25. xv Plato, *The Republic*, Bk. VIII, 562. (Loeb Classical Library).

xvi *ibid*. Bk. VIII, 564. Plato slightly exaggerates here but his conviction was that it is the way of democracy to put forward or elect someone as its special champion and protector and consequently cherish and magnify him. This is the way, according to him

through which the tyrants spring; tyrants sprout only from protectorate root and nothing else.

xvii This is another element in democracy: not only that office holders must be given consent by the majority of the people, but the decisions of the majority are upheld over the opinion of the minority, even in an unfair situation or misguided decision. And here stands one of the great gains as well as the tyranny of democracy: the 'democratic majority'. Shabanon calls it the subordination of the minority to the majority in all spheres and areas of political life... (Yu Shabanon, *The Problem of Social Democracy, in Period of Building Communism*, Moscow, p. 73).

xviii See Republic, vi, 501a. C. R. Lodge interpreting this attitude, maintained that Plato appeared to have followed «the general Hellenic aim of culture, i.e. of converting chaos into cosmos and of directing instinct by reason; and avoiding local traditions and feuds, in so far as these would give a historical bias to his constructions and force them into their own channels» (Plato's Theory of Education, London: Paul Kegan, 1947, p. 61). Writing immediately after the 2nd world war, Karl Popper combated this reason, reading instead some mischievous motives in Plato's foundation of the ideal state. For him, it is quite wrong to blame democracy for the political shortcomings of a democratic state. It is for us to improve matters in institutions and not found new states. (The Open Society and its Enemies, vol. 1, The Spell of Plato, London: Routledge and Paul Kegan, 1977, p. 127). xix Thucydides. The History of the Peloponnesian Wars ch. 17.

xx Hegel, G. W. F., *The Philosophy of History*, translated by J. Sibree, New York: Prometheus Books, 1991, p. 18. xxi Ibid.

xxii See, Frank L. Ludwig, «The Failure of Democracy» <http://franklludwig.com/democracy.html>. It is interesting to note that even Karl Marx, before his conversion to communism, had commended democracy against Hegelian totalitarianism, as that which correspond to «the essence of socialized man». He termed it 'true democracy' and characterized it thus: «In all states that are not democracies, the state, the law, the constitution is the dominant factor without really dominating, i.e. materially penetrating all the other spheres that are not political. In a democracy the constitution, the law and the state itself are only a selfdetermination of the people and a particular content of them in so far as it is a political constitution» (Karl Marx, *Selected Writings*, ed. D. McLellan, Oxford, 1977, p. 20). From the socialized man flows out all that penetrate the law, the constitution, the State, whereas in totalitarianism, the State could really dominate without materially penetrating all the spheres of social life.

xxiii Interview with Lt. General Luka Yusuf, entitled «How I Almost Shot My Own Soldier» reported by Kayode Ajala & Kingsley Omonobi, in Saturday Vanguard, Feb. 16, 2008, p. 13

xxiv *ibid.* xxv *ibid.*

xxvi Martin Luther King Jr., "The American Dream" in *A Testament of Hope*, edited by James Washington, New York: HarperCollins publishers, 1991, p. 35.

xxvii Roberto Suro, "Pope on Latin Trip, Attacks Pinochet Regime", in *New York Times*, April 1, 1987, pp. A1, A10.

xxviii Cf. Weigel, G., *Witness to Hope*, New York: First Cliff Street Books, 2001, p. 533.

xxix Plato, *Republic*, Bk. VIII, 562. Earlier, he described democracy as a regime «embroidered with every kind of character» (557c). What could provide a better opportunity to acquire all kinds of experience and knowledge than the regime which «contains all kinds of constitutions» (557d)? If «experience, knowledge and discussion» are decisive in judging political regimes in terms of pleasure or happiness, democracy seems to be the only regime which prepares one well because only democracy, being «full of liberty and freedom of speech» (557b), provides the required experience and allows the free discussion necessary for any competent judgment. xxx James Madison, "The Federalist No. 10", in *The Federalist*, ed. George Carey and James McClellan, Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1990, 43.

xxxi Shain Rail, in Maclean Iain, *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics*, Oxford Paperback Reference, 1996, p. 99, all in Pita Ejiofor, *Dynamics of Party Politics in Democracy*, p. 12.

xxxii *ibid.* xxxiii *ibid.* p. 18. xxxiv *ibid.* p. 13.

xxxv *Daily Independent*, «Supreme Court Affirms Obi As Anambra Governor», Jan. 30, 2008, p. 2. xxxvi *ibid.*

xxxvii Simeon O. Ebo, «Democratic Culture, the Church and Democratization in West Africa», in *Church and Democracy in West Africa*, *ibid.*, p. 69.

xxxviii Victor Azariya, «Civil Society and Disengagement in Africa», in Harbeson et al. (eds.) *Civil Society and State in Africa*, Lynne Rienner, London, 1994, p. 97–98.

xxxix Rousseau, J. J., *The Social Contract*, Penguin Classics, Middlesex, 1982, pp. 72-75